

tions of the same kind, while on the other hand should it be adverse the effect marketwise is not likely to be detrimental as provision has been fully made to comply with its requirements.

The next question of importance has been as to whether the regular dividend would be declared upon Steel Preferred or not. Reports of earnings show a very decided decrease from last year, but whether they will increase sufficiently by the time the dividend is payable, to enable the corporation to pay the full amount remains to be seen. The financial troubles of the past year have pretty thoroughly brightened dealers in all kinds of commodities, and so far as they could do so they shut down on all purchases; this naturally led to a large decrease in orders, but now many of them find that their trade is keeping up pretty well and within the past week or two orders, especially for iron and steel products, have shown a decided increase and at present there is every indication that they will still further increase, for as people at large see and realize that, excepting perhaps for a few days at the close of the year, the rates for money will not be excessive they will be more inclined to push and expand their business operations. This case in the money market is assured by the continued engagements of gold for shipment to this country, and the weak state of the exchange market is full evidence that these shipments will continue. The total amount received since November 1, and now on the way is some \$20,000,000. The large number of people who are stockholders in the United States Steel Corporation necessarily invest every move of the managers, with extraordinary interest and, when the question is upon the reduction of the amount of distribution of dividends they are all vitally interested. The value of a concern consists in its earning capacity and the amount and character of its assets and in this case only those who have made a careful and exhaustive study of the subject realize what a tremendous earning power the Steel Corporation possesses and what the real value of its assets of mines virgin ore, machinery of all kinds and real estate is. This earning power and these assets all unmistakably point to the fact that if this Corporation can go through the next two years without serious trouble that it will become one of the greatest properties in this or any other country, for it is a natural outgrowth of existing conditions and while at the moment it may be somewhat over-capitalized, it will soon grow up to it. To anyone who wishes to make an exhaustive study of this subject we would recommend them to read the inside history of the Carnegie Steel Co., by Mr. J. H. Bridge.

As intimated in one of our former letters sugar shows more signs of activity than it has done in some time and with the present question of the Revision of Tariff, which will come up in Congress, is quite likely to show greater life than it has in the recent past.

Pere Marquette and Colorado and Southern are two properties which we think will bear close watching as the condition of both warrants higher figures for the securities.

At present the market is a purely professional one and the indications are that it will not swing very greatly either one way or the other for some weeks to come. It is, however, very noticeable that when the depressions come they do not force out the long stock that they did during the summer and when the bears start in to cover the market runs up easily. The market to-day has been of this character and the changes in it have not been important nor significant.

T. C. DELAVAN.

LONDON LETTER.

FINANCE

London, December 3, 1903.

Markets preserve their recent move towards greater activity and to the man with liquid resources who can take his purchases right off the market, there are many bargains in high-class stocks. But for the speculator with borrowed capital there is nothing except the prospect of a tiring and a losing wait. As a consequence a very small proportion of our leading securities are now held speculatively.

Canada Fours and Threes are respectively just a fraction over and just a fraction under par and still preserve their place as the rebested colonial stocks which are most sought after and most highly priced by the investor in the United Kingdom.

Whilst affairs in the Far East are threatening matters political on the Continent have assumed a much pleasanter aspect. The British Parliamentary visit to Paris has passed off most satisfactorily. M. Loubet's toasts are heartily reciprocated by the whole British press, and the bulls of Internationals are so much the happier.

Amongst the new issues of the week is the advertised request of the Brookfield Mining Company, of Nova Scotia, for British investors to subscribe for a certain number of its one dollar shares. The document embodying the offer is undated and all the documents and statements are vague and unsatisfactory in the highest degree. Such offers are rightly resented by the informed investors here, and do a lot of harm to the prospect of any decent Canadian ventures which may come along.

The centennial date of a famous Stock Exchange fraud has just passed. A hundred years ago the nation was expecting peace with Napoleon, and hopes ran very high. A person dressed like a Government messenger, and in a terrible hurry, delivered at the Mansion House a letter purporting to come from Lord Hackesbury, who was then at the head of the Foreign Office. As it bore an apparently authentic F. O. seal, the Lord Mayor lost no time in communicating its contents to the stockbrokers and the rest of the adjacent world. The message was to the effect that the disputes between England and France had been amicably settled.

Consols which were at 63½ at once rushed up to 71½ and congratulations on the good news were at once sent to the Foreign Office, by a hastily equipped despatch rider. This gentleman brought back the startling news that there was not a word of truth in the alleged message of peace. Consols promptly fell back to a quotation lower than their original figure; but the swindlers (if they were not foolish, practical jokers), who engineered the false tidings, were robbed of their plunder as the Committee promptly closed the "House" and declared that all bargains made in the funds were null and void.

A great figure in British industrial finance has passed away in the person of Sir John Blundell Maple. "Maples" is a huge furnishing emporium, with assets worth, in the last balance sheet, \$12,000,000. "John Blundell's" father started the thing off in a very small way, only a matter of forty years ago. The present joint-stock company, of which Sir J. B. Maple was life president, with powers to appoint his own directors, has for years past regularly paid fourteen per cent. dividends, and has 6,500 share and debenture holders. Sir John used to promote and float big hotel companies, in order to secure the magnificent furnishing and equipment orders for his own company. He was also the most largely interested individual in West African mining enterprises.